

Pacific Future Environment Leaders Forum



2 - 4 April 2007 Apia, Samoa

Forum report





Collaborating partners



Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) - Regional Office for Asia-Pacific
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), Government of Samoa
Pacific Youth Environment Network (PYEN) - University of NSW, Sydney

Building social capital of Pacific communities

Pacific Island governments, along with other world leaders and civil society, have pledged their commitment to take action to change and promote sustainable development. Along with this commitment is the recognition that a sustainable future is dependent upon a considerable shift in attitudes, value, lifestyles and behaviour.

Education and training are critical components of SPREP's mandate and vision for sustainable development in the Pacific. This is clearly identified in SPREP's Strategic Programmes and Action Plan endorsed by Pacific leaders in 2004.

SPREP is committed to promoting environment for sustainable development issues in the Pacific, through supporting members develop national activities and initiatives, and through encouraging collaboration and partnerships to strengthen the profile of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the region. ESD is a vision of education that seeks to empower people to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future.

Education and Communication for a Sustainable Pacific: A Guiding Framework (2005 – 2007)
SPREP and members, with support from UNEP, have developed the Guiding Framework which aims to guide the implementation of education and communication initiatives to promote environment for sustainable development in the Pacific.

A key role of the Framework is to support the development of annual national action plans to focus on key priorities, whilst integrating the education and communication requirements of existing environmental/sustainable development programmes and initiatives.

Focusing on three key areas; Formal Education, Communication, and Capacity Development, Partnerships and Networks, the Framework provides realistic, achievable and measurable actions for supporting the integration of principles of sustainability into national action plans, and existing environment for sustainable development programmes.

SPREP hopes to continue to build capacity of the region's future environment leaders through continued leadership and professional development initiatives.

For more information visit: www.sprep.org/topic/awareness.htm



Fostering environmental leadership



The Pacific Future Environment Leaders Forum is a leadership initiative for young people interested in sustainable development in the Pacific, and who are committed to driving youth related sustainability issues in their respective countries.

The initiative is a key component of the capacity building programme of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). SPREP is an intergovernmental organisation working with Pacific island countries and territories to strengthen environmental management and promote sustainable development.

Throughout the region, considerable resources are invested in areas that will help communities and governments prepare for change. SPREP recognises the critical urgency to invest in people - to build the social capital of the Pacific islands; to ensure that the future leaders are equipped with the skills, knowledge, outlook and commitment to use the limited natural resources with the least impact on the fabric of Pacific identity. To prepare them to make decisions that meet the needs of the present, without compromising the needs of the future.

The first phase of this initiative is focussed on providing information, skills and knowledge about the key skills required to become a sustainability leader. From 2 – 4 April 2007, SPREP and UNEP (Regional Office for Asia-Pacific) brought together more than 30 young people, current and aspiring professionals, working or studying in the environment field, to attend the Pacific Future Environment Leaders Forum in Apia, Samoa.

Representing 14 Pacific countries and territories, the Forum explored the notions of global and regional leadership, while providing sessions in practical skills pivotal to effective environmental management including project management, proposal writing, and negotiation skills. The participants included a large contingent of students from USP in Suva, who came with smiles, a guitar, energy and a desire to learn and share their knowledge and experiences.

SPREP worked with key partners including the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Government of Samoa, UNEP and the Pacific Youth Environment Network (PYEN) to develop and deliver this leadership training programme.

SPREP will continue to work with its key partners to implement the next phases of this initiative, that will continue to highlight the need to engage young professionals in environmental management in the region.

A four-phase approach

The Forum is the first phase of a 12-month programme for young people working to promote environmental sustainability in the Pacific. This leadership programme aims to strengthen skills base, build networks throughout the region, provide mentorship opportunities and support greater access to opportunities for professional development.



Phase one: Skills building

With funding from UNEP, SPREP with its key partners facilitated the Pacific Future Environment Leaders Forum from 2 – 4 April in Apia, Samoa. This skills based learning forum covered topics such as leadership, sustainability issues, project management and regional environmental management and policies.

Phase two: Networking

The Pacific Youth Environment Network (PYEN) was established by UNEP to provide a mechanism for young people in the Pacific to engage in environmental issues in the Pacific. SPREP will work with the University of the South Pacific, to support the expansion of the PYEN and to encourage increased engagement by young people across the region. The role of this network is to provide a mechanism for young people to expand existing skills, resources, and to access opportunities to strengthen leadership skills.



Phase three: Mentorship

A key element of this youth leadership programme is the provision of opportunities for young people to establish connections with 'mentors' who can provide support in various areas. SPREP will work with USP, UNEP, PYEN and other agencies to connect young people up with potential mentors.



Phase four: Internships/placements

Providing on the job training is a key method to reinforce skills learning, and to access work experience opportunities. SPREP will work with key agencies to explore possibilities to provide workbased placements.

Forum programme

Official opening

The Forum was formally opened by the Associate Minister for Natural Resources and Environment of the Government of Samoa, Fonotoe Pierre Lauofo Meredith.

In his welcome address, the Director of SPREP, Mr Asterio Takesy, welcomed the participants to Samoa and acknowledged the ongoing partnership with UNEP to strengthen education and capacity building initiatives in the Pacific.

The Regional Director for Asia-Pacific (ROAP), UNEP, Mr Surendra Shrestha highlighted the importance of engaging youth in promoting environment for sustainable development in the Pacific.

Presentation by Future Environment Leader, and current Coordinator, Pacific Youth Environment Network (PYEN), Ms Faye Tamani.

MC, Seiuli Vainuupo Jungblut, Associate Ramsar Officer, SPREP.

Programme structure

The three day Forum was divided into three areas:

1. Information sharing
2. Skills-building
3. Visioning and next steps

Information sharing sessions

- **Mainstreaming Environment in the Asia Pacific: A vision for the 21st century**
Key presentation, Mr Surendra Shrestha, ROAP-UNEP
- **Environment for sustainable development issues in the Pacific**
Seve Paeniu, Sustainable Development Advisor, SPREP
- **Strengthening the environment community – civil society and youth networking**
Mr Mahesh Pradhan, Environmental Affairs Officer, ROAP-UNEP
- **Pacific Youth Environment Network (PYEN): Background, objectives and activities**
Mr Sunil Prasad, Coordinator, PYEN
- **Strengthening youth participation: a regional context**
Mr Tangata Vainerere, Human Development Programme, Secretariat of the Pacific Community
- **Youth activities in Samoa**
Division of Youth, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development
- **What is 'good' leadership? Panel discussion**
Mr Surendra Shrestha, ROAP-UNEP; Mr Asterio Takesy, SPREP; Vaimasenu'u Zita Tago Martel; Ben Namakin, Conservation Society of Pohnpei
- **Climate change abuses: our natural rights and resources in the Pacific**
Ben Namakin, Environmental Educator, Conservation Society of Pohnpei

Skills-building sessions

- **What's your climate impact? (And what are you going to do about it?)**

Calculating your travel greenhouse gas emissions
Adaptation measures in your community
Creative solutions
Will McGoldrick

- **Turning your dream into reality**

How to plan a project - proposal writing
Seve Paeniu, Sustainable Development Advisor, SPREP

- **Negotiation skills**

Clark Peteru, Environmental Legal Affairs Officer, SPREP



Visioning and next steps

- **Developing joint activities**

Proposal for a Pacific Youth State of the Environment Report

- **"I have a dream!" - visioning exercise**

Developing a message for the region

- **PYEN Activities for 2007 – Planning Session**



"I would like to challenge you to become the change you wish to see in this world. To have the courage to embody the principles, spirit and integrity to continue to strive for the change that needs to happen in the Pacific. To become the Pacific's future environmental leaders and to ensure that the beauty, uniqueness and diversity of the Pacific islands is protected." Director of SPREP, Mr Asterio Takesy.



Pacific Future Environment Leaders

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Next steps

Development of Pacific State of the Environment Report

A key outcome of the Forum was the proposal to develop a youth State of the Environment Report for the Pacific region. On 4 April, participants developed working groups and a coordination plan to research, write, produce and present the State of the Environment Report.

It is envisioned that this report will be presented to national environment policy-makers, and support continued efforts to engage young people in environmental issues in the Pacific.

This report is currently scheduled for completion in September 2007.

Preparation of message for region

"I would also like to ask that you develop a collective voice or message that can be delivered to the region about the importance of continuing to focus on building the capacity of young people in the Pacific islands," SPREP Director, Asterio Takesy

Following on from the SPREP Director's opening words, the participants began working on a message for the region about the importance of promoting environmental sustainability. This message is scheduled for completion in May 2007.

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In their own words - EVALUATION

"[The Forum] has been an amazing opportunity for me to meet with all Pacific youth who are passionate about the environment with so much care about the future of our children."

Ben Namakin, Environmental Educator, Conservation Society of Pohnpei, FSM

"The Forum provided a fantastic opportunity to meet with other young people with a passion for environmental issues, and to learn more about the challenges they face in their communities. Too often we work in silos, without looking to what other people are doing in the same field of work - this Forum allowed us change this.

The Pacific Youth Environmental Network will ensure the connections made through the Forum will continue into the future. We have such a small population in the Pacific, so we need to combine our voice if we are to be heard on the world stage. As young people, we have the passion, enthusiasm and drive to ensure our message is heard by the world's leaders, and now we have a vehicle through which we can speak."

*Anne Molineux, National President of the United Nations Youth Association (NZ)
New Zealand*

"For me personally, it made me expand my thoughts more about what I can do and what we as young people are capable of doing to save our Pacific. I couldn't help but feel excited and enlightened about what can be done about the damage that has already been done. At first, it was very saddening and frustrating to hear about the problems our world is facing, but now, there is hope that something can be done about it...Pacific youth have the drive and passion to spearhead such plans." *Jamal Talagi, Niue (currently studying at USP, Suva).*

Building blocks

Following are some suggestions from participants based on the Forum evaluation:

- Longer Forum - require more time for sessions
- Practical skills based sessions were the most useful: proposal writing, negotiation skills, adaptation to climate change exercise
- Discussions on key environmental issues in the Pacific - eg: renewable energy, practical examples of conservation
- More youth-driven exercises and sessions

Acknowledgements

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Future opportunities

SPREP hopes to continue this capacity building initiative on an annual basis. If you are interested in participating, or becoming a partner in the next Forum, please contact:

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